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***** Press Release *****

Historic Landmark Loew's Theatre to FINALLY Move Forward with Renovation & New Management

City of Jersey City & Friends of Loew's Community Group to Jointly Issue RFP for New Operator with International Reach; Ends Years of Litigation and Opens New Chapter for Journal Square

Jersey City – Following decades of slow progress, **Mayor Steven M. Fulop** joins the **Friends of Loew's** (FOL) to announce a new joint endeavor for an exciting new chapter at the iconic Loew's Theatre in Journal Square to restore and maximize the historic landmark's potential. City officials, in cooperation with FOL, are issuing a request for proposals (RFP) with the goal of boosting programming as well as supporting significant restoration and improvement of the theatre, listed on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places.

As the city moves forward with a renewed relationship with the community-based nonprofit organization, the Loew's Jersey is poised to achieve new heights as a major regional arts and entertainment venue. **The city is accepting proposals for the redevelopment, operation and management of the Loew's, in fusion with FOL, that not only satisfy the objectives of the theatre's Redevelopment Plan, but also align with the Administration's overall commitment to stimulating responsible reinvestment in the city and enhance quality of life.**

"The pandemic is not going to slow the city down, and after 6 years of stalled progress and litigation we are excited to finally have a positive plan in conjunction with FOL. We will now restore the theatre and find a partner that can bring world class talent on a regular basis to Jersey City," Mayor Fulop said.

"This is a significant step for Journal Square and the entire city."

The historic Loew's will be an integral part of the revival and rehabilitation of the Journal Square area - Jersey City's historic city center and one of the busiest transportation hubs in the region. The renovation is projected to cost nearly \$40 million, with the city incorporating alternative financing such as historic tax credits, contributions from local developers, and other financing sources.

While the Loew's Jersey is in operable condition and is currently open in limited capacity, it does require additional restoration and renovation to allow for full occupancy, improvement and modernization of production capabilities to expand the number and scale of productions, and increased patron comfort. Ultimately, the city's vision is to expand the operation of the Loew's as a cultural and entertainment venue in which major commercial programming is presented regularly while maintaining and growing the diverse additional affordable programming -- such as local arts, theatrical, dance, multi-cultural, educational, film, and community-related shows, events, and activities.



The RFP seeks to find a commercial promoter and venue operator to partner in programming the Loew's and bring a regular schedule of major national and international acts that will add to the diverse arts, community, and film shows already presented by FOL. Colin Egan is a founder of Friends of the Loew's established to preserve and reopen the Loew's, and as its director he has been in charge of FOL's programming since.

"I think we can create a practical partnership between FOL as a dynamic, community-based arts organization, and a major commercial promoter/venue operator so we can create something more expansive, successful, and contributory to our community than would be possible by either alone," **Mr. Egan** said. "FOL is committed to the goal of having the Loew's host a regular schedule of commercial programming for the affordable enjoyment of area residents, and also as a means to provide support for the Theatre and other programming in it."

The majestic and historic Loew's Jersey Theatre was called "The Most Lavish Temple of Entertainment In New Jersey" when it opened at Jersey City's Journal Square nearly 91 years ago for its soaring ceilings, coffered gold ceilings, plush red drapes, more than 3,000 seats, large stage for live shows, and large screen for movies. The Loew's ceased presenting a regular schedule of live shows in the mid-1930s in the wake of the advent of talking pictures and the need to cut costs during the Great Depression. But the Loew's continued as a first run movie house, remaining an iconic local venue for decades, well past the time that many of its contemporaries were closed. In 1973, the Loew's Jersey was converted into a triplex to reflect the changed business model of motion picture presentation. In 1986, the Loew's Jersey was closed, sold and slated for demolition, but FOL was formed and called for the Theatre to be reopened and restored as a multi-discipline arts and entertainment center. Jersey City joined in this vision, and in 1993 bought the Loew's Jersey. It has since remained underutilized.

"There have been many roadblocks over the past several decades which is why the theatre has remained underutilized, but we've come to the point where we will make the turn to revive the Journal Square gem that has unparalleled history and untapped potential... until now," concluded Mayor Fulop.

About Loew's Theatre

The Loew's Jersey is one of five "Wonder Theaters" built in the tristate area in the late 1920s by the Loew's Corporation, which had created and owned MGM Studios and was at the time one of the most important presenters of both live stage shows and movies. The five theatres were movie palaces - a unique building type which, somewhat belying its name, combined large seating capacities and some of the most ornate architecture ever built with then state-of-the-art movie projection capabilities and also stage and backstage facilities to support large touring shows. The Loew's Corporation spared little expense in building the five Wonder Theatres, making them exceptionally ornate and functionally capable compared even to many other movie palaces. The Loew's Jersey cost \$2,000,000 to build -- a very large sum at the time.

In its first years, the Loew's hosted stage shows with some of the greatest stars of the 1930s, including Cab Calloway, George Burns, Gracie Allen, and Duke Ellington. A young and unknown Frank Sinatra took his date to the Loew's in 1933 to see Bing Crosby on stage, and according to Nancy Sinatra, that's when her father was inspired to pursue his own singing career. Movie stars including Judy Garland, Humphrey Bogart and Jean Harlow made promotional appearances there. The Four Seasons gave a concert at the Loew's in 1967.

In recent years, stars like Patti Labelle, Kurt Vile and Courtney Barnett, Yo La Tengo, Sufjan Stevens, Neutral Milk Hotel, The Decemberists, The Duprees, and Beck have graced the Loew's stage. Authors George R. Martin and Stephen King, as well stars Nick Offerman, Anna Faris, and Brian Cranston have all sat down to discuss their new books.

And over the years the Loew's has often been a filming location for movies, television shows, and music videos. In 2018 the Loew's was used for scenes in the film, "The Joker", starring Joaquin Phoenix in an Academy Award winning performance. Last year, Apple TV's "Dickinson" was filmed there.

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